



NEWS RELEASE
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A Million Americans Join State & Federal Lawmakers Across Country Today in Rallying for Afterschool

Americans young and old, from all walks of life, are coming together today for the seventh annual *Lights On Afterschool*, the only nationwide rally for afterschool programs. Actors Rhea Perlman and Kevin Sorbo, national spokespeople for *Lights On Afterschool*, are joining participants in calling for more afterschool resources. In all, more than 7,500 events are taking place across the country and at military bases around the world. *Lights On Afterschool* is organized by the Afterschool Alliance.

Among the events being held today:

- 🔔 In Anchorage, Alaska, 13 afterschool programs are focusing on literacy for *Lights On Afterschool*. At each program, Anchorage School District Reading specialists and teachers will share tips and tricks parents can use to help their children learn to read. Children will participate in reading activities or play literacy games.
- 🔔 Bradenton, Florida Mayor Wayne Poston and State Congressman Bill Galvano are joining parents, kids, educators and others at an afternoon rally on the steps of the Court House.
- 🔔 The Urban League of Champaign County, Illinois is celebrating *Lights On Afterschool* by turning its gymnasium into a “CSI” style crime scene. Students will perform scientific experiments to solve the crime.
- 🔔 St. Paul, Minnesota Mayor Chris Coleman is welcoming guests at the *Lights On Afterschool* expo being hosted by Youth Community Connections. Youth will perform African drumming, orchestra music and Hmong dancing, spoken word and beatboxing.
- 🔔 In Austin, Texas, the Travis County Afterschool Network is hosting the 3rd Annual Breakfast of Champions awards breakfast. Volunteers, policy makers, media partners and community advocates will be honored for their outstanding service to afterschool programs in the Central Texas area.

Federal and state lawmakers are showing their support for the afterschool programs that keep kids safe, inspire them to learn and help working families by attending events and issuing statements of support for *Lights On Afterschool*. With unanimous, bipartisan approval, both the U.S. House and Senate passed resolutions in support of the goals and ideals of *Lights On Afterschool*. Senate Concurrent Resolution 116 was introduced by Senator Christopher Dodd

(D-CT) with 45 co-sponsors representing both political parties. The House of Representatives Concurrent Resolution 478: Lights On Afterschool was introduced by Congresswoman Nita Lowey (D-NY) with 26 cosponsors from both sides of the aisle. Forty-nine governors issued proclamations declaring October 12 *Lights On Afterschool Day*.

“Today, throughout the nation, Americans are standing up for children and families,” said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. “With one voice we are sending the message that we support afterschool programs and we want more of them, so that all kids are safe and have opportunities to learn and explore new interests after the school day ends.”

A new survey of afterschool program leaders, released today by the Afterschool Alliance in conjunction with *Lights On Afterschool*, finds that many afterschool programs are fully subscribed but still unable to meet the demand in their communities. Respondents to the web-based survey say budget cuts and stagnation are taking a toll on afterschool programs, and the youth and families they serve. Providers report that future funding is insecure, and many have already been forced to make painful cuts to their programs. The new survey, **Uncertain Times: Funding Insecurity Puts Afterschool Programs at Risk**, also finds that afterschool programs are serving a high need population, and serving more children than expected.

Lights On Afterschool was launched in October 2000 with 1,200 events across the country. Last year, a million people participated to show their support for afterschool programs. A complete list of *Lights On* events is available online at http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/lights_on/events.cfm.

The Afterschool Alliance is a nonprofit public awareness and advocacy organization working to ensure that all children have access to quality afterschool programs by 2010. More information is available at www.afterschoolalliance.org.

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